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THE
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F L O R A.

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[PRICE THREE SHILLINGS.]

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S E I B A F



A R O L F

XX

PRICE THREE SHILLINGS

THE
FABLES OF FLORA.

BY DR. LANGHORNE

—SYLVAS, SALTUSQUE SEQUAMUR
INTACTOS—

VIRG.

THE FIFTH EDITION.



L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. BECKET, IN THE STRAND.
MDCCLXXIII.

THE
FABLES OF FLORA.

BY DR. LANGHORNE.

—SYLVAS, SALTUSQUE SEQUAMUR

—INTACTOS—

THE FIRST EDITION



PRINTED FOR T. BEECHER, IN THE STRAND.
MDCCCLXXXII.

DEDICATION.

THE COUNTESS

OF
HERTFORD.

MADAM,

9x THERE is a tax upon the Name of the
Countess of HERTFORD, an heredi-
tary obligation to patronize the Muses ; and
in times like these, when their influence, I
will not say their reputation, is on the de-
cline, they can by no means dispense with so
essential a privilege. I intreat you, Madam,
to take the following poems under your pro-

B

tection.

DEDICATION.

tection. They were written with an unaffected wish to promote the love of Nature and the interests of Humanity. On the credit of such motives I lay them at your feet, and beg to be esteemed,

MADAM,

MADAM,

Your most devoted and

most obedient servant,

JOHN LANGHORNE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

*I*N the following Poems, the plan of Fable is somewhat enlarged, and the province so far extended, that the original NARRATIVE and MORAL may be accompanied with imagery, description, and sentiment. The scenery is formed in a department of Nature adapted to the genius and disposition of POETRY; where she finds new objects, interests, and connexions, to exercise her fancy and her powers. If the execution, therefore, be unsuccessful, it is not the fault of the Plan, but of the Poet.

NOTICE

It is to be observed that the following Poem, the plan of which is somewhat enlarged, and the province

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THE FABLES OF FLORA.

FABLE I.

The SUNFLOWER and the IVY.

AS duteous to the place of prayer,
Within the convent's lonely walls,
The holy sisters still repair,
What time the rosy morning calls :

So fair, each morn, so full of grace,
Within their little garden reared,
The flower of PHOEBUS turned her face
To meet the POWER she loved and feared.

10 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

And where, along the rising sky,

Her God in brighter glory burned,
Still there her fond observant eye,
And there her golden breast she turned.

When calling from their weary height
On western waves his beams to rest,
Still there she fought the parting fight,
And there she turned her golden breast.

But soon as night's invidious shade
Afar his lovely looks had borne,
With folded leaves and drooping head,
Full sore she grieved, as one forlorn.

Such duty in a flower displayed
The holy sisters smiled to see,
Forgave the pagan rites it paid,
And loved its fond idolatry.

But

THE FABLES OF FLORA. 11

But painful still, though meant for kind,

The praise that falls on Envy's ear !

O'er the dim window's arch entwined,

The cankered Ivy chanced to hear.

And " See, she cried, that specious flower,

" Whose flattering bosom courts the sun,

" The pageant of a gilded hour,

" The convent's simple hearts hath won !

" Obsequious meanness ! ever prone

" To watch the patron's turning eye ;

" No will, no motion of its own !

" 'Tis this they love, for this they sigh :

" Go, splendid sycophant ! no more

" Display thy soft seductive arts !

" The flattering clime of courts explore,

" Nor spoil the convent's simple hearts.

" To

12 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

" To me their praise more justly due,
" Of longer bloom, and happier grace !
" Whom changing months unaltered view,
" And find them in my fond embrace."

" How well," the modest flower replied,
" Can ENVY's wrested eye elude
" The obvious bounds that still divide
" Foul FLATTERY from fair GRATITUDE."

" My duteous praise each hour I pay,
" For few the hours that I must live ;
" And give to him my little day,
" Whose grace another day may give."

" When low this golden form shall fall
" And spread with dust its parent plain ;
" That dust shall hear his genial call,
" And rise, to glory rise again."

" To thee, my gracious power, to thee

" My love, my heart, my life are due!

" Thy goodness gave that life to be;

" Thy goodness shall that life renew,

" Ah me! one moment from thy sight

" That thus my truant-eye should stray!

" The God of glory sets in night;

" His faithless flower has lost a day."

Sore grieved the flower, and drooped her head;

And sudden tears her breast bedewed;

Consenting tears the sisters shed,

And, wrapt in holy wonder, viewed.

With joy, with pious pride elate,

" Behold," the aged abbess cries,

" An emblem of that happier fate

" Which heaven to all but us denies.

14 THE FABLES OF FLORA

" Our hearts no fears but dutious fears,

" No charm but duty's charm can move ;

" We shed no tears but holy tears,

" Of tender penitence and love.

" See there the envious world pourtrayed

" In that dark look, that creeping pace !

" No flower can bear the Ivy's shade ;

" No tree support its cold embrace.

" The oak that rears it from the ground,

" And bears its tendrils to the skies,

" Feels at his heart the rankling wound,

" And in its poisonous arms he dies."

Her moral thus the matron read,

Studious to teach her children dear,

And they by love, or duty led,

With pleasure heard, or seemed to hear.

Yet

THE FABLES OF FLORA 15

Yet one less duteous, not less fair,

(In convents still the tale is known)

The fable heard with silent care,

—But found a moral of her own.

The flower that smiled along the day,

And drooped in tears at evening's fall ;

Too well she found her life display,

Too well her fatal lot recall.

The treacherous Ivy's gloomy shade,

That murdered what it most embraced,

Too well that cruel scene conveyed

Which all her fairer hopes effaced.

Her heart with silent horror shook ;

With sighs she sought her lonely cell :

To the dim light she cast *one* look ;

And bade *once more* the world farewell.

FABLE II.

The EVENING PRIMROSE.

THERE are that love the shades of life,
 And shun the splendid walks of fame ;
 There are that hold it rueful strife
 To risque AMBITION'S losing game :

That far from ENVY'S lurid eye
 The fairest fruits of GENIUS rear,
 Content to see them bloom and die
 In Friendship's small but kindly sphere.

Than vainer flowers tho' sweeter far,
 The Evening Primrose shuns the day ;
 Blooms only to the western star,
 And loves its solitary ray.

In

THE FABLES OF FLORA.

17

In EDEN'S vale an aged hind,

At the dim twilight's closing hour,

On his time-smoothed staff reclined,

With wonder viewed the opening flower.

" Ill-fated flower, at eve to blow,"

In pity's simple thought he cries,

" Thy bosom must not feel the glow

" Of splendid suns, or smiling skies,

" Nor thee, the vagrants of the field,

" The hamlet's little train behold ;

" Their eyes to sweet oppression yield,

" When thine the falling shades unfold.

" Nor thee the hasty shepherd heeds,

" When love has filled his heart with cares,

" For flowers he rifles all the meads,

" For waking flowers—but thine forbears.

E

" Ah !

8 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

" Ah ! waste no more that beauteous bloom

" On night's chill shade, that fragrant breath,

" Let smiling suns those gems illumine

" Fair flower, to live unseen is death."

Soft as the voice of vernal gales

That o'er the bending meadow blow,

Or streams that steal thro' even vales,

And murmur that they move so slow :

Deep in her unfrequented bower,

Sweet Philomela poured her strain ;

The bird of eve approved her flower,

And answered thus the anxious swain.

Live unseen !

By moonlight shades, in valleys green,

Lovely flower, we'll live unseen.

THE FABLES OF FLORA. 19

Of our pleasures deem not lightly,

Laughing day may look more sprightly,

But I love the modest mien,

Still I love the modest mien

Of gentle evening fair, and her star-trained queen.

Didst thou, shepherd, never find,

Pleasure is of pensive kind?

Has thy cottage never known

That she loves to live alone?

Dost thou not at evening hour

Feel some soft and secret power,

Gliding o'er thy yielding mind,

Leave sweet serenity behind;

While all disarmed, the cares of day

Steal thro' the falling gloom away?

Love to think thy lot was laid

In this undistinguished shade.

Far

THE FABLES OF FLORA.

Far from the world's infectious view,
 Thy little virtues safely blew.
 Go, and in day's more dangerous hour,
 Guard thy emblematic flower.

Of gentle evening fair, and her hair-trained queen

Softly she came, and with her train

Didst thou, shepherd, never find I saw

Pleasure is of peaceful kind, and thou wast found

Has thy cottage never known

That the lover to live alone?

Doth thou not at evening hour

Feel some soft and secret power

Gliding o'er thy yielding mind,

Leave sweet serenity behind;

While all distanced, the cares of day

Steal thro' the falling gloom away?

Love to think thy lot was laid

In this undisturbed shade.

FABLE III.

The LAUREL and the REED.

THE * Reed that once the shepherd blew
 On old CEPHISUS' hallowed side,
 To SYLLA's cruel bow applied,

Its inoffensive master flew,

Stay, bloody foldier, stay thy hand,

Nor take the shepherd's gentle breath :

Thy rage let innocence withstand ;

Let music soothe the thirst of death.

He frowned—He bade the arrow fly—

The arrow smote the tuneful swain ;

No more its tone his lip shall try,

Nor wake its vocal soul again.

* The reeds on the banks of the Cephisus, of which the shepherds made their pipes, Sylla's foldiers used for arrows.

F

CEPHISUS,

22 THE FABLES OF FLORA

CEPHISUS, from his fedgy urn,

With woe beheld the sanguine deed :

He mourned, and, as they heard him mourn,

Affenting sighed each trembling Reed.

“ Fair offspring of my waves, he cried ;

“ That bind my brows, my banks adorn,

“ Pride of the plains, the rivers' pride,

“ For music, peace, and beauty born !

“ Ah ! what, unheedful have we done ?

“ What dæmons here in death delight ?

“ What fiends that curse the social fun ?

“ What furies of infernal night ?

“ See, see my peaceful shepherds bleed !

“ Each heart in harmony that vyed,

“ Smote by its own melodious Reed,

“ Lies cold, along my blushing side.

“ Back

THE FABLES OF FLORA. 23

- " Back to your urn, my waters, fly ;
" Or find in earth some secret way ;
" For horror dims yon conscious sky,
" And hell has issued into day."

Thro' DELPHI'S holy depth of shade
The sympathetic sorrows ran ;
While in his dim and mournful glade
The genius of her groves began.

- " In vain CEPHEUS fights to save
" The swain that loves his watry mead,
" And weeps to see his reddening wave,
" And mourns for his perverted Reed :

- " In vain my violated groves
" Must I with equal grief bewail,
" While desolation sternly roves,
" And bids the sanguine hand assail.

" God

" God of the genial stream, behold

" My laurel shades of leaves so bare !

" Those leaves no poet's brows enfold,

" Nor bind APOLLO's golden hair.

" Like thy fair offspring, misapplied,

" Far other purpose they supply ;

" The murderer's burning cheek to hide,

" And on his frownful temples die.

" Yet deem not these of PLUTO's race,

" Whom wounded NATURE sues in vain ;

" Pluto disclaims the dire disgrace,

" And cries, indignant, " They are men."

FABLE IV.

The GARDEN ROSE and the WILD ROSE.

AS DEE, whose current, free from stain,
Glides fair o'er MERIONETH's plain,

By mountains forced his way to steer

Along the lake of PIMBLE MERE,

Darts swiftly thro' the stagnant mass,

His waters trembling as they pass,

And leads his lucid waves below,

Unmixed, unfullied as they flow—

So clear thro' life's tumultuous tide,

So free could THOUGHT and FANCY glide;

Could HOPE as sprightly hold her course,

As first she left her native source,

Unsought in her romantic cell

The keeper of her dreams might dwell.

G

But

26 THE FABLES OF FLORA

But ah ! they will not, will not last—
When life's first fairy stage is past,
The glowing hand of HOPE is cold ;
And FANCY lives not to be old.
Darker, and darker all before ;
We turn the former prospect o'er ;
And find in MEMORY's faithful eye
Our little stock of pleasures lie.

Come, then ; thy kind recesses ope !
Fair keeper of the dreams of HOPE !
Come with thy visionary train ;
And bring my morning scenes again !

To ENON's wild and silent shade,
Where oft my lonely youth was laid ;
What time the *woodland* GENIUS came,
And touched me with his holy flame.—

Or, where the hermit, BELA, leads
 Her waves thro' solitary meads;
 And only feeds the desert-flower,
 Where once she soothed my slumbering hour:
 Or roused by STAINMORE's wintry sky,
 She wearies echo with her cry;
 And oft, what storms her bosom tear,
 Her deeply-wounded banks declare.—

Where EDEN's fairer waters flow,
 By MILTON's bower, or OSTRY's brow,
 Or BROCKLEY's alder-shaded cave,
 Or, winding round the Druid's grave,
 Silently glide, with pious fear
 To found his holy slumbers near.—

To these fair scenes of FANCY's reign,
 O MEMORY! bear me once again:
 For, when life's varied scenes are past,
 'Tis simple Nature charms at last.

28 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

'Twas thus of old a poet prayed ;
Th' indulgent power his prayer approved,
And, ere the gathered Rose could fade,
Restored him to the scenes he loved.

A Rose, the poet's favourite flower,
From FLORA's cultured walks he bore ;
No fairer bloomed in ESHER's bower,
Nor PRIOR's charming CHLOE wore.

No fairer flowers could FANCY twine
To hide ANACREON's snowy hair ;
For there ALMERIA's bloom divine,
And ELLIOT's sweetest blush was there.

When she, the pride of courts, retires,
And leaves for shades, a nation's love,
With awe the village maid admires,
How WALDEGRAVE looks, how WALDEGRAVE moves.

So

So marvelled much in ENON'S shade
 The flowers that all uncultured grew,
 When there the splendid ROSE displayed
 Her swelling breast, and shining hue.

Yet one, that oft adorned the place
 Where now her gaudy rival reigned,
 Of simpler bloom, but kindred race,
 The pensive EGLANTINE complained.—

“ Mistaken youth,” with sighs she said,
 “ From nature and from me to stray !
 “ The bard, by splendid forms betrayed,
 “ No more shall frame the purer lay.

“ Luxuriant, like the flaunting ROSE,
 “ And gay the brilliant strains may be,
 “ But far, in beauty, far from those,
 “ That flowed to nature and to me.”

30 THE FABLES OF FLORA

The poet felt, with fond surprize,

The truths the Sylvan critic told ;

And " though this courtly Rose," he cries,

" Is gay, is beauteous to behold ;

" Yet, lovely flower, I find in thee

" Wild sweetness which no words express,

" And charms in thy simplicity,

" That dwell not in the pride of dress."

FABLE V.

The VIOLET and the PANSY.

SHEPHERD, if near thy artless breast
The god of fond desires repair ;

Implore him for a gentle guest,

Implore him with unwearied prayer.

Should beauty's soul-enchanting smile,

Love-kindling looks, and features gay,

Should these thy wandering eye beguile,

And steal thy wareless heart away ;

That heart shall soon with sorrow swell,

And soon the erring eye deplore,

If in the beauteous bosom dwell

No gentle virtue's genial store.

32 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

Far from his hive one summer-day,

A young and yet unpractised bee,

Borne on his tender wings away,

Went forth the flowery world to see.

The morn, the noon in play he passed,

But when the shades of evening came,

No parent brought the due repast,

And faintness seized his little frame.

By nature urged, by instinct led,

The bosom of a flower he sought,

Where streams mourned round a mossy bed,

And violets all the bank enwrought.

Of kindred race, but brighter dies,

On that fair bank a Pansy grew,

That borrowed from indulgent skies

A velvet shade and purple hue.

The

The tints that streamed with glossy gold,
 The velvet shade, the purple hue;
 The stranger wondered to behold,
 And to its beauteous bosom flew.

Not fonder haste the lover speeds,
 At evening's fall, his fair to meet,
 When o'er the hardly-bending meads
 He springs on more than mortal feet.

Nor glows his eye with brighter glee,
 When stealing near her orient breast,
 Than felt the fond enamoured bee,
 When first the golden bloom he prest.

Ah! pity much his youth untried,
 His heart in beauty's magic spell!
 So never passion thee betide,
 But where the genial virtues dwell.

aid T "

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34 THE FABLES OF FLORA

In vain he seeks those virtues there;
 No soul-sustaining charms abound;
 No honeyed sweetness to repair
 The languid waste of life is found.

An aged bee, whose labours led
 Thro' those fair springs, and meads of gold,
 His feeble wing, his drooping head
 Beheld, and pitied to behold.

" Fly, fond adventurer, fly the art
 " That courts thine eye with fair attire;
 " Who smiles to win the heedless heart,
 " Will smile to see that heart expire.

" This modest flower of humbler hue,
 " That boasts no depth of glowing dyes,
 " Arrayed in unbespangled blue,
 " The simple cloathing of the skies—

" This

" This flower, with balmy sweetness blest,

" May yet thy languid life renew:"

He said, and to the Violet's breast

The little vagrant faintly flew.

CROWN IMPERIAL.

FROM BACTRIA'S VALES, WHERE BEAUTY BLOWS
LUXURIANT IN THE GENIAL RAY;

WHERE FLOWERS A BOLDER GEM DISCLOSE,
AND DEEPER DRINK THE GOLDEN DAY:

FROM BACTRIA'S VALES TO BRITAIN'S SHORE
WHAT RISE THE CROWN IMPERIAL CANOES
FALL HIGH THE GLAZED STANGER BOWS
THE HONOURS OF HIS BIRTH AND NAME.

IN ALL THE POMP OF EASTERN STATE,
IN ALL THE EASTERN GLORY GAY,
HE BADE WITH NATIVE PRIDE CLAD,

ELEBA
EACH FLOWER OF HUMBLER BIRTH OBEY.

O, that

F A B L E VI

The QUEEN OF THE MEADOW and the
CROWN IMPERIAL.

FROM BACTRIA'S vales, where beauty blows
Luxuriant in the genial ray ;
Where flowers a bolder gem disclose,
And deeper drink the golden day :

From BACTRIA'S vales to BRITAIN'S shore
What time the CROWN IMPERIAL came,
Full high the stately stranger bore
The honours of his birth and name.

In all the pomp of eastern state,
In all the eastern glory gay,
He bade, with native pride elate,
Each flower of humbler birth obey.

O, that

THE FABLES OF FLORA. 37

O, that the child unborn might hear,
Nor hold it strange in distant time,
That freedom even to flowers was dear,
To flowers that bloomed in Britain's clime!

Thro' purple meads, and spicy gales,
Where STRYMON's * silver waters play,
While far from hence their goddess dwells,
She rules with delegated sway.

That sway the CROWN IMPERIAL fought,
With high demand and haughty mien :
But equal claim a rival brought,
A rival called the MEADOW'S QUEEN.

" In climes of orient glory born,
" Where beauty first and empire grew ;
" Where first unfolds the golden morn,
" Where richer falls the fragrant dew :

* The Ionian Strymon.

38 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

" In light's ethereal beauty drest,

" Behold," he cried, " the favoured flower,

" Which FLORA's high commands invest

" With ensigns of imperial power !

" Where prostrate vales, and blushing meads,

" And bending mountains own his sway,

" While PERSIA's lord his empire leads,

" And bids the trembling world obey ;

" While blood bedews the straining bow,

" And conquest rends the scattered air,

" 'Tis mine to bind the victor's brow,

" And reign in envied glory there.

" Then lowly bow, ye British flowers !

" Confess your monarch's mighty sway,

" And own the only glory yours,

" When fear flies trembling to obey."

He

THE FABLES OF FLORA. 39

He said, and sudden o'er the plain,
From flower to flower a murmur ran,
With modest air, and milder strain,
When thus the MEADOW'S QUEEN began.

" If vain of birth, of glory vain,
" Or fond to bear a regal name,
" The pride of folly brings disdain,
" And bids me urge a tyrant's claim:

" If war my peaceful realms assail,
" And then, unmoved by pity's call,
" I smile to see the bleeding vale,
" Or feel one joy in nature's fall,

" Then may each justly vengeful flower
" Pursue her Queen with generous strife,
" Nor leave the hand of lawless power
" Such compass on the scale of life.

" One

" One simple virtue all my pride I

" The wish that flies to misery's aid ;

" The balm that stops the crimson tide * ,

" And heals the wounds that war has made."

Their free consent by Zephyrs borne,

The flowers their MEADOW'S QUEEN obey ;

And fairer blushes crowned the morn,

And sweeter fragrance filled the day."

* The property of that flower.

" And then, unmoved by pity's call,

" I smile to see the bleeding vale,

" Or feel one joy in nature's fall,

" Then may each justly vengeful flower

" Pursue her Queen with generous spite,

" Nor leave the hand of justice power

" Such compals on the scale of life."

" One

F A B L E VII.

The WALL-FLOWER.

“ **W**HY loves my flower, the sweetest flower
“ That swells the golden breast of May,
“ Thrown rudely o’er this ruined tower,
“ To waste her solitary day?

“ Why, when the mead, the spicy vale,
“ The grove and genial garden call,
“ Will she her fragrant soul exhale,
“ Unheeded on the lonely wall?

“ For never sure was beauty born
“ To live in death’s deserted shade!
“ Come, lovely flower, my banks adorn,
“ My banks for life and beauty made.”

Thus PITY waked the tender thought,
 And by her sweet persuasion led,
 To seize the hermit-flower I fought,
 And bear her from her stony bed.

I fought—but sudden on mine ear
 A voice in hollow murmurs broke,
 And smote my heart with holy fear—

The GENIUS of the *Ruin* spoke.

“ From thee be far th’ ungentle deed,

“ The honours of the dead to spoil,

“ Or take the sole remaining meed,

“ The flower that crowns their former toil!

“ Nor deem that flower the garden’s foe,

“ Or fond to grace this barren shade;

“ ’Tis NATURE tells her to bestow

“ Her honours on the lonely dead.

“ For

“ For this, obedient Zephyrs bear
 “ Her light seeds round yon turret’s mold,
 “ And undispersed by tempests there,
 “ They rise in vegetable gold.

“ Nor shall thy wonder wake to see
 “ Such desert scenes distinction crave;
 “ Oft have they been, and oft shall be
 “ Truth’s, Honour’s, Valour’s, Beauty’s grave.

“ Where longs to fall that rifted spire,
 “ As weary of th’ insulting air;
 “ The poet’s thought, the warrior’s fire,
 “ The lover’s sighs are sleeping there.

“ When that too shakes the trembling ground,
 “ Borne down by some tempestuous sky,
 “ And many a slumbering cottage round
 “ Startles—how still their hearts will lie!

" Of them who, wrapt in earth so cold,
 " No more the smiling day shall view,
 " Should many a tender tale be told ;
 " For many a tender thought is due.

" Haft thou not seen some lover pale,
 " When evening brought the pensive hour,
 " Step slowly o'er the shadowy vale,
 " And stop to pluck the frequent flower ?

" Those flowers he surely meant to strew
 " On lost affection's lowly cell ;
 " Tho' there, as fond remembrance grew,
 " Forgotten, from his hand they fell.

" Has not for thee the fragrant thorn
 " Been taught her first rose to resign ?
 " With vain but pious fondness borne
 " To deck thy NANCY's honoured shrine !

" 'Tis

" 'Tis NATURE pleading in the breast,

" Fair memory of her works to find;

" And when to fate she yields the rest,

" She claims the monumental mind.

" Why, else, the o'ergrown paths of time

" Would thus the lettered sage explore,

" With pain these crumbling ruins climb,

" And on the doubtful sculpture pore?

" Why seeks he with unwearied toil

" Thro' death's dim walks to urge his way,

" Reclaim his long-asserted spoil,

" And lead OBLIVION into day?

" 'Tis NATURE prompts, by toil or fear

" Unmoved, to range thro' death's domain:

" The tender parent loves to hear

" Her childrens' story told again.

M

" Treat

" Treat not with scorn his thoughtful hours,
 " If haply near these haunts he stray ;
 " Nor take the fair enlivening flowers
 " That bloom to cheer his lonely way."

" Why, else, the overgrown pains of time
 " Would thus the fattered sage explore,
 " With pain these crumpling ruins climb,
 " And on the doubtful sculpture pore ?

" Why seeks he with unwearied toil
 " Thro' death's dim walks to urge his way,
 " Reclaim his long-suffered spoil,
 " And lead Oarion into day ?

" 'Tis Nature prompts, by toil or fear
 " Unmoved, to range thro' death's domain :
 " The tender parent loves to bear
 " His children's loss, cold again

FABLE

F A B L E VIII

The TULIP and the MYRTLE*.

'T WAS on the border of a stream

A gayly-painted Tulip stood,
And, gilded by the morning beam,
Surveyed her beauties in the flood.

And sure, more lovely to behold,
Might nothing meet the wistful eye,
Than crimson fading into gold,
In streaks of fairest symmetry.

The beauteous flower, with pride elate,
Ah me! that pride with beauty dwells!
Vainly affects superior state,
And thus in empty fancy swells.

* This Fable was first published in a Collection of Letters, supposed to have passed between St. Eyremond and Waller.

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" O lustre of unrivalled bloom !

" Fair painting of a hand divine !

" Superior far to mortal doom,

" The hues of heaven alone are mine !

" Away, ye worthless, formless race !

" Ye weeds, that boast the name of flowers !

" No more my native bed disgrace,

" Unmeet for tribes so mean as yours !

" Shall the bright daughter of the sun

" Associate with the shrubs of earth ?

" Ye slaves, your sovereign's presence shun !

" Respect her beauties and her birth.

" And thou, dull, fullen ever-green !

" Shalt thou my shining sphere invade ?

" My noon-day beauties beam unseen,

" Obscured beneath thy dusky shade !

" Deluded

" Deluded flower !" the Myrtle cries,

" Shall we thy moment's bloom adore ?

" The meanest shrub that you despise,

" The meanest flower has merit more.

" That daisy, in its simple bloom,

" Shall last along the changing year ;

" Blush on the snow of winter's gloom,

" And bid the smiling spring appear.

" The violet, that, those banks beneath,

" Hides from thy scorn its modest head,

" Shall fill the air with fragrant breath,

" When thou art in thy dusty bed.

" Even I, who boast no golden shade,

" Am of no shining tints possess'd,

" When low thy lucid form is laid,

" Shall bloom on many a lovely breast.

50 THE FABLES OF FLORA

" And he, whose kind and fostering care

" To thee, to me, our beings gave,

" Shall near his breast my flowrets wear,

" And walk regardless o'er thy grave.

" Deluded flower, the friendly screen

" That hides thee from the noon-tide ray,

" And mocks thy passion to be seen,

" Prolongs thy transitory day.

" But kindly deeds with scorn repaid,

" No more by virtue need be done :

" I now withdraw my dusky shade,

" And yield thee to thy darling fun."

Fierce on the flower the scorching beam

With all its weight of glory fell ;

The flower exulting caught the gleam,

And lent its leaves a bolder swell.

Expanded by the searching fire,
The curling leaves the breast disclosed ;
The mantling bloom was painted higher,
And every latent charm exposed.

But when the sun was sliding low,
And evening came, with dews so cold ;
The wanton beauty ceased to blow,
And sought her bending leaves to fold.

Those leaves, alas ! no more would close ;
Relaxed, exhausted, fickening, pale ;
They left her to a parent's woes,
And fled before the rising gale.

F A B L E IX.

The BEE-FLOWER*.

COME, let us leave this painted plain ;

This waste of flowers that palls the eye :

The walks of NATURE's wilder reign

Shall please in plainer majesty.

Thro' those fair scenes, where yet she owes

Superior charms to BROCKMAN's art,

Where, crowned with elegant repose,

He cherishes the social heart—

* This is a species of the Orchis, which is found in the barren and mountainous parts of Lincolnshire, Worcestershire, Kent, and Hertfordshire. Nature has formed a Bee apparently feeding on the breast of the flower with so much exactness, that it is impossible at a very small distance to distinguish the imposition. For this purpose she has observed an economy different from what is found in most other flowers, and has laid the petals horizontally. The genus of the Orchis, or Satyrion, she seems professedly to have made use of for her paintings, and on the different species has drawn the perfect forms of different insects, such as Bees, Flies, Butterflies, &c.

Thro'

Thro' those fair scenes we'll wander wild,
 And on yon pastured mountains rest ;
 Come, brother dear ! come, Nature's child !
 With all her simple virtues blest.

The sun far-seen on distant towers,
 And clouding groves and peopled seas,
 And ruins pale of princely bowers
 On BEACHBOROUGH'S airy heights shall please.

Nor lifeless there the lonely scene ;
 The little labourer of the hive,
 From flower to flower, from green to green,
 Murmurs, and makes the wild alive.

See, on that flowret's velvet breast
 How close the busy vagrant lies !
 His thin-wrought plume, his downy breast,
 Th' ambrosial gold that swells his thighs !

O

Regardless,

54 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

Regardless, whilst we wander near,
Thrifty of time, his task he plies;
Or sees he no intruder near?
And rest in sleep his weary eyes?

Perhaps his fragrant load may bind
His limbs;—we'll set the captive free—
I fought the living Bee to find,
And found the picture of a Bee.

Attentive to our trifling selves,
From thence we plan the rule of all;
Thus NATURE with the fabled elves
We rank, and these her *Sports* we call.

Be far, my friends, from you, from me,
Th' unhallowed term, the thought profane,
That LIFE'S MAJESTIC SOURCE may be
In idle fancy's trifling vein.

Remember still, 'tis NATURE's plan
 Religion in your love to find;
 And know, for this, the first in man
 Inspired the imitative mind.

As conscious that affection grows,
 Pleased with the pencil's mimic power *;
 That power with leading hand she shews,
 And paints a Bee upon a flower.

Mark, how that rooted mandrake wears
 His human feet, his human hands !
 Oft, as his shapely form he tears,
 Aghast the frightened plowman stands.

* The well known Fables of the Painter and the Statuary that fell in love with objects of their own creation, plainly arose from the idea of that attachment, which follows the imitation of agreeable objects, to the objects imitated.

56 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

See where, in yonder orient stone,
She seems ev'n with herself at strife,
While fairer from her hand is shewn
The pictured, than the native life.

HELVETIA'S rocks, SABRINA'S waves,
Still many a shining pebble bear,
Where oft her studious hand engraves
The perfect form, and leaves it there.

O long, my PAXTON *, boast her art ;
And long her laws of love fulfil :
To thee she gave her hand and heart,
To thee, her kindness and her skill !

* An ingenious Portrait Painter in Rathbone Place.

F A B L E X.

The WILDING and the BROOM.

IN yonder green wood blows the Broom;
 Shepherds, we'll trust our flocks to stray,
 Court nature in her sweetest bloom,

And steal from care one summer-day.

From Him * whose gay and graceful brow

Fair-handed HUME with roses binds,

We'll learn to breathe the tender vow,

Where flow the fairy FORTHA winds.

* WILLIAM HAMILTON of Bangour.

58 THE FABLES OF FLORA

And oh! that He * whose gentle breast
In nature's softest mould was made,
Who left her smiling works impress'd
In characters that cannot fade.

The WILTING and the BROOM.
That He might leave his lowly shrine,
Tho' softer there the Seasons fall—
They come, the sons of verse divine,
They come to fancy's magic call.

And feel from each one summer-day.
" What airy sounds invite
" My steps not unreluctant, from the depth
" Of SHENE's delightful groves? Reposing there
" No more I hear the busy voice of men
" Far-toiling o'er the globe—save to the call
" Of soul-exalting poetry, the ear
" Of death denies attention. Rouzed by her,

* THOMSON.

" The

" The genius of sepulchral silence opes
 " His drowfy cells, and yields us to the day.
 " For thee, whose hand, whatever paints the spring,
 " Or swells on summer's breast, or loads the lap
 " Of autumn, gathers heedful—Thee whose rites
 " At nature's shrine with holy care are paid
 " Daily and nightly, boughs of brightest green,
 " And every fairest rose, the god of groves,
 " The queen of flowers, shall sweeter save for thee.
 " Yet not if beauty only claim thy lay,
 " Tunefully trifling. Fair philosophy,
 " And nature's love, and every moral charm
 " That leads in sweet captivity the mind
 " To virtue—ever in thy nearest cares
 " Be these, and animate thy living page
 " With truth resistless, beaming from the source
 " Of perfect light immortal—Vainly boasts
 " That golden Broom its sunny robe of flowers
 " Fair are the sunny flowers; but, fading soon

" And

60 THE FABLES OF FLORA.

" And fruitless, yield the forester's regard
" To the well-loaded Wilding—Shepherd, there
" Behold the fate of song, and lightly deem
" Of all but moral beauty."

—————" Not in vain"—

I hear my HAMILTON reply,
(The torch of fancy in his eye)
" 'Tis not in vain," I hear him say,
" That nature paints her works so gay ;
" For, fruitless tho' that fairy broom,
" Yet still we love her lavish bloom.
" Cheered with that bloom, yon desert wild
" Its native horrors lost, and smiled.
" And oft we mark her golden ray
" Along the dark wood scatter day.

" Of moral uses take the strife ;
" Leave me the elegance of life.

" Whatever

THE FABLES OF FLORA. 61

" Whatever charms the ear or eye,

" All beauty and all harmony

" If sweet sensations these produce,

" I know they have their moral use.

" I know that NATURE's charms can move

" The springs that strike to VIRTUE's love."

Where stops the passing eye to morn;

The rock he hollowed o'er him weeps

And cold drops wear the fretted stone.

In this dim cave, of different crowd,

An hermit's holy abode rest:

The school-boy finds the frequent bead,

Which many a formal prayer best.

That tract-time full well I know,

When here I brought, in broken hour

The daisy's magic Mithras

The holy hermit's Passion-flower.

Q

FABLE

F A B L E XI.

The MISLETOE and the PASSION-FLOWER.

IN this dim cave a druid sleeps,
Where stops the passing gale to moan ;
The rock he hollowed o'er him weeps,
And cold drops wear the fretted stone.

In this dim cave, of different creed,
An hermit's holy ashes rest :
The school-boy finds the frequent bead,
Which many a formal matin blest.

That truant-time full well I know,
When here I brought, in stolen hour,
The druid's magic Mistletoe,
The holy hermit's Passion-flower.

THE FABLES OF FLORA 63

The offerings on the mystic stone
Pensive I laid, in thought profound,
When from the cave a deepening groan
Issued, and froze me to the ground.

I hear it still—Dost thou not hear?
Does not thy haunted fancy start?
The sound still vibrates thro' mine ear—
The horror rushes on my heart.

Unlike to living sounds it came,
Unmixed, unmelodized with breath;
But, grinding thro' some scannell frame,
Creaked from the bony lungs of death.

I hear it still—"Depart," it cries;
"No tribute bear to shades unblest;
"Know, here a bloody druid lies,
"Who was not nursed at Nature's breast,

"Associate

64 THE FABLES OF FLORA

“ Associate he with dæmons dire,
 “ O’er human victims held the knife,
 “ And pleased to see the babe expire,
 “ Smiled grimly o’er its quivering life.

“ Behold his crimson-streaming hand—
 “ Erect!—his dark, fixed, murderous eye!”
 In the dim cave I saw him stand;
 And my heart died—I felt it die.

I see him still—Dost thou not see
 The haggard eye-ball’s hollow glare?
 And gleams of wild ferocity
 Dart thro’ the sable shade of hair?

What meagre form behind him moves,
 With eye that rues th’invading day;
 And wrinkled aspect wan, that proves
 The mind to pale remorse a prey?

What

THE FABLES OF FLORA. 65

What wretched—Hark—the voice replies,

“ Boy, bear these idle honours hence !

“ For, here a guilty hermit lies,

“ Untrue to Nature, Virtue, Sense.

“ Tho’ Nature lent him powers to aid

“ The moral cause, the mutual weal ;

“ Those powers he sunk in this dim shade,

“ The desperate suicide of zeal,

“ Go, teach the drone of faintly haunts,

“ Whose cell’s the sepulchre of time ;

“ Tho’ many a holy hymn he chaunts,

“ His life is one continued crime.

“ And bear them hence, the plant, the flower ;

“ No symbols those of systems vain !

“ They have the duties of their hour ;

“ Some bird, some insect to sustain.”

THE END.

What wretched—Hark!—the voice replies,

“Boy, bear these idle honours hence!

“For, here a guilty hermit lies,

“Untrue to Nature, Virtue, Sense.

“Tho’ Nature lent him powers to aid,

“The moral code, the mutual weal;

“Those powers he sunk in this dim shade,

“The desperate suicide of zeal.

“Go, teach the dross of faintly haunts,

“Whole cells the sepulchre of time;

“Tho’ many a holy hymn the chants,

“His life is one continued crime.

“And bear them hence, the plant, the flower;

“No symbols those of systems vain!

“They have the duties of their hour;

“Some bird, some insect, to sustain.

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